*Primitiæ Regiminis Davidici.*

OR,

# THE FIRST-FRUITS OF DAVIDS *GOVERNMENT*,

*Vowed* to God before, and *offered* at his actual admission thereunto.

*REPRESENTED*

In a Sermon at the Assises held at *Reading*, for the County of *Berks*, *Feb.* 28. 1653.

By *Simon Ford*, B. D. and Pastour of the Congregation at St. *Laurence* Church in the said Town.

*Published*

At the joint desire of the High Sheriff, and Justices of Peace for the said County; which (with some mis reports since blown about concerning it, and the Author) inclined him to give way thereunto.

LONDON,

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TO

THE HONOURABLE,

Judge *Atkins*, one of the Justices of the *Common-Pleas*; as also to the right Worshipfull *William Backhouse* of *Swallowfield*, Esq. High Sheriffe of the County of *Berks*; together with the right Worshipfull, the Gentry, both of and out of the Commission for the Peace of the said County; and principally to those, at whose request this Sermon was made publique.

My Lord, and Gentlemen,

THis Sermon having adventured it self upon the hazardous Tryal of God and the Bench, was adjudged to the Press, when its Author was not by to plead on his own behalf; who surely had he been privy to the Judgement,

(*which was onely reported to him by some few of the number*) *would have intreated the Gentlemen not to adventure the reputation of their discretions upon a piece too unworthy the notice of such an Honourable Judicature.*

*I confesse I looke upon the comming under the* Stationers Presse, *in these dayes, as a punishment to a Sermon, no lesse* (*in its kind*) *then that of* the same denomination, *which you in some cases inflict upon offendors; seeing it is thereby exposed to the weight of publique calumnies and reproaches, of which I am sure mine shall not want its sufficient load.*

*The onely remedy I have herein, is once more to present its case before you its Judges,* (*which I doe in this* Dedication) *and to intreat you that the* Grand-Inquest *you impannell to enquire concerning it, may be so wise as to understand the evidence of Truth that is in it; and so honest, as not to returne an* Ignoramus, *for* Billa vera.

*Surely,* (My Lord, and Gentlemen) *you that are sufficiently acquainted with the* Yerburies, Chillendens, Ives's, *and others of an inferiour Order, whom it would be too much*

*much honor to name, seeds-men of the Devil, with whom this poore Town hath beene perpetually pestered and poysoned, will, I doubt not, see cause for that tartnesse of application in the close, for which I have been sufficiently persecuted by the tongues of those, who found their backs too tender to be rubbed.*

*Those mens names, and some of the Errors and Heresies they vented, I represented to your last Grand-Jury, and hoped they also would have seen cause either to have reported them to your Lordship, and the Bench, or at least not to have mis-reported me, (as some of them did) to others, as unable to justifie my charge.*

My Lord, and Gentlemen, *I commit the Vindication of my name, and of this Truth, first, to God, who (I am sufficiently assured) will* bring forth its righteousnes as the light; *and (among men) to your wiser, and more impartiall judgements, hoping that you will (as farre as it concernes you) impresse the substance of it upon your Consciences, and walkings. And I pray that that Edition may be* correctior & emendatior, *more perfect then the Originall Copy it self: that you may* live *Sermons better then I can* Preach

*or print them. And upon that account, I will preach and print as often as you please; upon other terms I care not how seldome. And this, because I am*

Reading,

*May* 24. 1654.

(My Lord, and Gentlemen,)

Your most zealously affectionate well-wisher, and (upon that account) servant in the Gospel,

SIMON FORD.

# A SERMON

## Preached at the *Assises* holden for the County of *Berks* at *Reading*, *Feb.* 28. 1653. Mr. *William Backhouse* of *Swallowfield*, SHERIFFE.

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PSAL. 75. 4, 5, 6, 7.

*I said (or rather, I will say) to the fools, deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, lift not up the horn*, v. 4.

*Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiffe neck*, v. 5.

*For promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South*, v. 6.

*But God is the Judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another*, v. 7.

THis Psalm is a good Magistrates Directory, because it is the Copy of that Kings heart, who was a man after Gods own heart. *David*, at the time of the writing hereof, is by most sound Interpreters supposed to have been in that Morning-

Twilight of Royalty, a midling condition between a King and no King, which you have described, 2 *Sam.* 2, and 3 Chapters. *Ishbosheth* the son and heir of *Saul*, the late King, was yet strugling for ten parts in twelve of the whole Kingdome. 'Twas an hot dispute of two years continuance. But at last, *Davids* house grows stronger and stronger, and *Ishbosheths* weaker and weaker, *chap.* 3. 1. This day-star of approaching Royalty, being thus got above the Horizon, and fore-telling the nearness of the Sun to dispel the mists of his long doubts and fears, (it is supposed) sets *Davids* harp and heart in tune; and thereupon he takes occasion to testifie his thankfulness in this ἐπινίειον εὐχαριστικον, or triumphant thankful Ode. His thankfulness is partly *Verbal*, in the acknowledgement of Gods faithfulness, in so near an issue of an expected mercy, (for this he means by the *nearness of Gods name*, v. 1.) and of his Soveraign Power and Justice, in the way wherein he accomplished it, v. 7, 8, 9. And partly *Real*, in the resolvedness of his heart, to repair the breaches and ruines of *Sauls* dissolute Government. The whole State, both *Ecclesiastical* and *Civil*, was like a *melted Vessel*, run into a lump of confusion and disorder, (for that is the Original emphasis of that phrase, *The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved*, v. 3. And there was no hope that ever it would be a Vessel for honour or use any more, except a skilful Founder undertook to new-cast it. Such an one was *David*, and that he might give assurance of his undertaking, he before-hand declares the mould or model unto which he will reduce it.

מוג
*Dissolutus liquefactus fuit.*

1. He

1. He will first cement the broken pieces of the old frames, *viz.* Religion, Law, and Justice, which are the pillars of all Government.

2. He will secure those pillars from the insolent petulancy of bold and presumptuous offenders, by a severe execution of the utmost severity and rigour of divine and humane Laws upon them. And both these he will do upon the consideration of his conscientious obligation thereunto; and that upon this account, because all his power is confessedly subordinate to Gods, which is the sum of my Text, and the following verse.

*I will say* (for so I read it with *Pagnus* and *Masculus*) *unto the fools, deal not so foolishly, &c.*

*For promotion cometh, &c.*

In which words you have two general parts:

1. *Davids resolution* of reformation, *I will say, &c.*

2. The *reason* of that resolution *For promotion, &c.*

In the first of these you may further observe,

1. The subjects of it, *Fools*, (that is, bad men, but such whose sins are only prejudicial to themselves) & *wicked men*, such who by reason of long remissenes of Civil Government, during the unquiet & turbulent reign of *Saul*, were grown to a great height of presumption & violence, daring all Laws both divine & human out of countenance, which he expresseth by two phrases, speaking with a stiffe neck, and lifting up the horn, Metaphors taken from unbroken Colts, or wild Bulls, who are altogether impatient of the bridle or the yoke. Sons of *Belial* indeed, if the received Etymology of that word hold water. These are the persons that *David* intends to deal withal in this resolved reformation.

הוללים boasting fools; רשעים troublesome fools.

בלי־עול *qui non est jugum.*

2. The

2. The nature of it, and that is by way of restraint upon their unruly lusts: for this *saying* implies *doing*. *De muritâ vindictâ & exercione intelligendum est*, one sayes; *Cohibebo* (sayes another) *petulantes regni & ecclesiæ perturbatores, zealous and resolute Authority useth not to speak vain words.* This *saying* is like that *Psal.* 2. 5. where God is said to speak to such another generation of wild Beasts, but how? so, as to *vex them in his sore displeasure.* So here, *I will say to the fools, &c.* is as much, as I will by wholesome Laws, and a zealous execution of them, either amend their persons, or (at least) restrain their lusts. If they will *deal foolishly*, they shall not *deal so foolishly*, and if they will *wear horns* still, yet they shall not *lift the horn on high.*

Musculus.

2. The second general part may look two wayes:

1. Either as a *reason* prevailing with *David* thus to put forth his power to curb the insolencies of wicked men. *For promotion* (*i.e.* my promotion, by which I am advanced to the succession of *Sauls* Throne) *cometh, &c.*

2. Or as a *lesson* which he would by just severity teach them, who had sinned themselves into a near affinity to Atheism, by so long and uncontrolled a liberty of lust, and insolencies. *Just severity in Deputy gods may teach men so much Religion, as, that there is a God that judgeth the earth.* But I rather look upon it as a motive to *David* himself. And then the Argument runs thus: I was awhile since a poor Shepherds boy, and I am now advanced to the *potentia proxima* of an absolute Royalty. Therefore it concerns

me

me gratefully to acknowledge, and zealously to act for him that advanced me, and (*seeing promotion comes not from the East*, &c. *But God is the Judge*, &c.) I will answer his ends in my advancement.

This part hath two branches:

1. A *negation of power* in any *creature* to give, or take away honour and power. Though all assistance from all quarters of the world should concenter their endeavours for one mans exaltation, they could not do it, if God will pull him down; and *è contra*, Though the whole *posse* of the Creation, were raised to pull a man down, yet if God say nay, their endeavours shall be successeless. *David* here takes his expressions from the Topography of the land of *Palestine*, and expresseth *East* and *West* distinctly, but includes *North* and *South*, both under the expression of *midbar*, *the Desart*, that Country being on both *North* and *South* sides bounded with waste lands of that denomination. Whence your *Margin* reads it *Desart*, and your English Meter, *forsaken wilderneſſe*.

2. An *assertion of that power and prerogative in God alone. He is Judge*, i.e. absolute, and independent, insomuch that he is no way taxable, though he puts in and puts out, lifts up, and pulls down according to his own good pleasure; And yet proceeds in a way of regular justice in this case of male-administration. *As a Judge*.

Thus you see I have done this part of my task, *i. e.* taken to pieces this excellent watch, and shewed you the *wheels*, and the *spring*, *Davids reformation*, and the *impulsive cause* of it. But the harder

harder part of my business is yet to come, *viz.* to put it together again, that you may take direction from its hand in the business of so solemn a convention, as is that which hath brought you hither this day.

I know the *spring-wheel* should first be taken in hand, as the foundation must be laid before the building, in an exact order of nature. But the order I shall proceed by is Theological, and therefore I shall first begin with the Balance, *David's* resolution of a just reformation, and then annex the reason at the last, to set it a going.

And first and foremost we will consider,

The subjects of this reformation. I said unto the *fools*, and to the *wicked*. Such then *David* found, even among the great ones, when he came to the Kingdom; he found beasts, and those armed with power, horned beasts: And such there will be every where, let the Laws be but a while silenced, and the Magistrate, either sleep, or connive, or both. Observe,

*Evils not suppressed, will be spreading Evils.* The case of such a *Common-wealth* will quickly be like the *field of the sluggard*, described *Prov.* 24. 31. *all grown over with thorns, and nettles will cover the face thereof*, (for ill weeds grow apace) *and the wall* of order and discipline will quite be *broken down*. There had need be diligent weeders to keep the field of a Common-wealth from being overspread. They had need be good hedges, that must keep in such unruly beasts, as my Text speaks of. *Qui non prohibet peccare, cùm possit, jubet.* If there be none to *forbid* the *fools* to *deal foolishly*, there need be none to *bid* them do so; he bids

bids them, that, when he can, doth not forbid them. Men (in a ſpiritual ſenſe) are all *naturall fools, folly is bound up in the heart of a child*, Prov. 22. and they need not be *taught* that *trade*; if they be but permitted to *ſet up* for themſelves, he had need be a wiſer man then ordinary that ſhall keep them within any bounds of reaſon or conſcience; for, obſerve again,

*Wickedneſs tolerated will grow inſolent.* Such fools, if the rod of correction do not diſcipline them, will know no difference, between ſimple folly and down-right madneſs. The *Aſſes colt* will turn his *ears* into *horns*, and grow *horn-mad*, and puſh againſt all thoſe that ſhall endeavour to bring him under the yoke. *Sin* and *Errour loſe nothing by indulgence.* If a logge be King, the frogs will quickly be preſumptuouſly petulant, and inſult over its ſluggiſhneſſe. A Magiſtrate *couchant* will quickly make offenders *rampant*. We uſe to ſay, when an horſe runs away with a young rider, *he knows who is upon the back of him.* The weakneſs or unskilfulneſs of the hand that manageth him, is a provocation to him to attempt the caſting off his burthen. There is nothing which is more intolerable *then a ſervant when he reigns*, if *Solomon* may be believed, Prov. 30. 22. When thoſe baſe luſts of men that under reſtraint ſeemed very ſubmiſs, are once let at liberty, they will rage the more intolerably; and much, out of anger they have been bridled.

*Two things* there were in *Sauls* Government, and the interval of *Davids*, that expoſed the Land to theſe wild beaſts, and their inſolencies, which among the reſt of the cauſes are (like *Saul* him-

himself, among the people) higher by the shoulders.

1. *A perpetual Militia.* Wars, Forain and Civil, defensive and offensive. And those (though never so necessary) like ill Physick, breed more ill humors, then they purge out. All Civil Authority must be silent, while the ratling of Arms drowns their voice; and the *sword of the Law* must submit to the *Law of the sword.* Thence the Souldiers in *Plutarch* wondered that any one should *read Law* to them that *wrot it* by their side, οὐ παύσεσθε ἡμῖν ἐπιζωσμένοις ξίφη, νόμους ἀναγινώσκοντες; War (in a sort) necessitates irregularities, not only against Civil, but even Military Laws. Martial Law, saith one, is as great a Solœcisme, as Martial peace.

*Plut. in Pompeio.*

Modern Policy.

Thence, when God threatneth war to his people, he tells them, that Military Insolency shall cast contempt upon Civil Magistracy, *they shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheeke,* Micah 5. 1. And when he cals for that Judgment upon a people, he is said to invite the *beasts of the field to devour,* Isa. 56. 9. There is a kind of *customary ferity* bred in the minds of men, by constant and familiar converse with instruments of death and violence, which will not easily be charmed into a peaceable submission to civil restraints, though the most discreet Magistrate *charm never so wisely.* Far be it from me, to asperse the persons of any of that profession among us. I can truly say of divers of them, what *Tertullus* said flatteringly, concerning *Felix* the Governour of *Judaa, by them we enjoy great quietness,* which we cannot but *accept alwayes, and in all places with*

*much*

*much thankefulness*, *Act.* 24. 2, 3. But I speak of the influences of that profession upon the generality of those that professe it, and the people living under the exercise of it. *Militaribus animis*, (says *Salust*) *adhibenda fomenta ut pacem ferre velint.* I dare say, your Lordships experience can testifie, that most of those that make a trade of the highway, are the reliques of routed and disbanded Forces, (who like the unjust Steward) *cannot dig, and to beg are ashamed*, and therefore follow that trade.

2. *The maintaining of a faction opposite to the faithful Prophets and Priests of the Lord.* *Samuel* for many years before *Sauls* death was laid aside, as a man of too rigid a spirit for *Sauls* designs; and *Abimelech* and the Priests were looked upon as confederate with *David*, and upon the information of a treacherous *Doeg*, murthered upon suspicion thereof. And no wonder, if they that are grown so bold, as to trample upon the Embassadours of God, make as bold with the Laws and Ordinances of man. I am sure, in Gods just judgment, *Civil confusions* have used to accompany *Church confusions*; when *Judeh* in *Abijahs* time was *without a teaching Priest*, they were also without *peace*, they went in and out of their own houses with hazard of their lives, 2 *Chron.* 15. 3. I am glad, we of this Nation are at last grown so wise as to see that *Church-Levelling* needs nothing but a power to its will to introduce *State-Levelling* too; and that the *Honourable Robes* of Magistracy and Law are at the barre of many men ignorant and sottish fury, no less guilty of Antichristianism, then the *contemptible black coats*

of

of the Miniſtry of the Goſpel. Aſſure your ſelves, My Lord, and you of the worſhipful Bench, that 'tis only the awe of Conſcience that ſubdues the fury, and rage of mens luſts; your Proviſions of Law are *a lower bank*, which theſe violent wayes will quickly break over, when once they ſwell above thoſe ſacred *main banks* of Religious Principles and Inſtitutions. *Let Magiſtrates maintain Gods Ordinances, God will theirs.*

In this caſe *David* found the Kingdom, a kind of wilderneſs of wild beaſts. And therefore we need not wonder at his *reſolution* of a ſevere reformation, of ſetting the nets and toils of good Laws to take them, (my next head which now comes to hand.)

*I will ſay unto the fools, &c.* Obſerve,

*Inſolent offenders muſt be curbed with a reſolute ſeverity.* All diſeaſes (ſay Phyſitians of greateſt note,) are cured by contraries. And (by conſequence) the diſeaſes of the body Politick occaſioned by remiſſneſs, require more rough and churliſh Phyſick to remove them. *Ne corporis quidem morbos, veteres, & diu auctos niſi per dura & aſpera curaveris: corruptus, & corrumpens, eger & flagrans animus haud levioribus remediis reſtinguendus eſt, quàm libidinibus ardeſcit,* ſayes *Tacitus*. Stiffe-necked Colts will not be managed with a ſlack rein. Let *David* come to the Throne with never ſo much reſolution, yet he will find enough to do when he comes to act that reſolution. He will find cauſe to complain that the ſons of *Zeruiah are too ſtrong for him*, 2 *Sam.* 3. 39. Wherefore he is fain to die in their debt, and to leave it upon his ſon *Solomon* to diſcharge, 1 *Kings* 2. 5. And when he goes

out

out of the world his last words back his first resolution, 2 *Sam.* 23. 6, 7. *But the sons of* Belial *&c.*

In such cases, a Magistrate had need to sharpen the *sword* of Justice with the *file* of resolution; *Fiat justitia, ruat cœlum.* Come what will, or can come, he must be armed against it with a fixed purpose of getting the enemies ground, or dying upon his own: of gaining the horse, or losing the saddle; *sawing* off the *horns* of these wilde beasts, or being *gored* by them. He must resolve to be the *Champion* of Justice whiles he can, and when he can no longer be so, he must become her Martyr.

A Judges *heart* and his *robes* must be both *dyed in grain*, else the *colour* of the one, and the *courage* of the other will quickly fade. Good Ministers should have the Motto of *Aarons* Miter written upon their fore-heads, *Holiness to the Lord*; and Magistrates should have written upon their hearts, what *Moses* had on his, *Resolution for the Lord.* This alone will fortifie a man against all mollifying considerations. Thus the Sons of *Levi* came armed to execute the vengeance of the Lord against Idolaters, *Deut.* 33. 9. compared with *Exod.* 32. 26, 27, 28. But *when* doth *David* resolve to put these resolves in execution? Even as soon as the reins of government are put into his hand. As soon as he receives the *Congregation*, *v.* 2. And lest we should think this was the issue of some hasty thoughts, which upon better advice he would see cause not to stand to; you shall hear him back it in another Psalm, *I will early destroy all the wicked of the Land*, Psa. 101. *ult.* Observe, (from the time)

That *Magistrates reforming resolutions must be speedily and effectually prosecuted.* For,

1. Good resolutions will cool again, when they are off from the fire of a present good mood, if they be not speedily put in execution.

2. Delays in this case are dangerous; when the fire once gets to the house-top, the least delay will quickly render it unquenchable. If a small Army be suffered to entrench, and victual *themselves*, a great strength will have enough to do to conquer them.

If the Sea break in upon a Land, it may be at the first a little labour will repair the bank; but if it be neglected but a few dayes, all the Country cannot turn it out again.

*Novi ego quod primo fuerat medicabile vulnus.*
*Neglectum longæ damna tulisse moræ.*

2 Tim. 2. 17. Wickedness will spread *as a Gangrene*, (and especially that which the Apostle speaks of in that place, Heresie) and toleration makes it incurable.

3. Opportunities and seasons of doing good, are not in our hands, but Gods. This is the ground of that advice of *Mordecai* to *Hester*, *Who knoweth but that thou art come to the Kingdom for such a time as this?* Hester 4. 13.

And this leads me to the second general part of my Text, *the ground of* Davids *resolution*, [*For promotion cometh neither from the East, &c.*]

Which words are an *universal negation* of creature-power in the managery of State-affaires, further then Gods Providence co-operates with it. *Men are apt to expect advancement from second causes.* *Politicians* use to have their Engines at work in all Quarters. Such correspondencies in

the

the *East*, and such in the *West*, &c. And they are apt to conclude, if but such or such a design take (one of many) that makes for their advantage. And when their plots are spoiled in one part, yet they maintain hope from another quarter of the world. And indeed, *This is the spring of all manner of irregular compliances*, with those from whom we expect furtherance in our designs, that we look upon them, as our advancers. Thence (saith *Solomon*) *many seek the Rulers favour*, *Prov.* 29. 26. and that with sordid and horrid encroachments upon the principles of ingenuity and conscience, licking up the very spittle of great ones, (as is reported of *Dyonisius* his flatterers) and conforming to their very vices and imperfections, as is reported of *Alexanders* courtiers, that imitated his wry neck.

And in the last Kings reign, in the encroachments upon the publique liberty by Ship-money and Monopolies, His Judges, (all but one or two that went with honour to their graves) perswaded him 'twas Law, and his Divines 'twas Conscience. As if they had both been of the mind of *Cambyses* his Councellors, who advising with them in a case of incestuous marriage, they told him all the Statute Law of the Land was against him; but there was another Law, that the King might do what he would.

Now *the ready way to keep men from irregular courses for advancement, is to perswade them*, (O that God would do it) *that vain is the help of man. Trust not in Princes, nor in the son of man*, (saith *David*) *in whom there is no help*, *Psal.* 146. 3.

And, *Cursed be he that maketh flesh his arm, and*

*whose heart departeth from the Lord.* Creature-confidence is the mother of Apostasie, and desertment, *Jer.* 17.5,6.

But where then is the *spring of preferment?* And from what Fountain doth it flow? The last part of my Text tells you, *God is the Judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another.* Of which in a few words, and then I shall dismiss you with a word or two by way of application to the present occasion. Observe hence,

*All the Translations of Civil power in the world, are the effects of a* Divine, *and that, a just Providence.* God works these changes, and that as a *Judge*, in a judicial way.

There is nothing in the world of more common *observation*, and less solemn and sanctified *meditation*, then the various turnings of the wheel of Providence. One while, a *David* taken from the Sheep-coat, from *following the Ews great with young*, and advanced (in *Homers* phrase) εἰς ποιμένα λαῶν, to be a *Shepherd of men*, his Sheep-hook changed into a Scepter, and his seat of turf to a Royal throne. A *Joseph* from an imprisoned slave, to a Royal Favorite. A *Gideon*, from a threshing floor, raised to be a Saviour of *Israel*, and his *threshing instrument of wood*, changed into one of *iron, to thresh the mountains*, as God himself phraseth it. *Hester* a poor captive maid, advanced to a royal bed, *Hest.* 2. 6,17. And in prophane stories, a Dictator from the Plough, and an Emperour from the hog-trough, a third from keeping the Cowes, &c. And our *Hen.* the 8. took his two great favourites, the one from the Slaughter-house, and the other from the Forge.

Psal. 78. 71.

Jud. 6. 11

Isa. 41. 15.

On

On the other side, *Adonibezek* a mighty Prince, made Fellow-Commoner with the Dogs; and *Nebuchadnezzar*, a mightly Conquerour, and one that lifted his horn to a great height, turned a grazing with the Oxen; and *Herod* in his most sumptuous apparel, and amidst the shouts and acclamations of his people, reduced from a conceited God, to be the most loathsome of men; a living carrion, arrested by the vilest of creatures, upon the suit of his affronted Creator. A great *Haman* feasted with the King one day, and made a feast for Crowes the next, *Hest.* 7. 10. Jud. 1. 7. Dan. 4. 28. Acts 12. 23.

And in humane stories, who knows not that one of the greatest Commanders in the world, was carried about in an Iron-grate, to be a foot-stool to an insulting Conquerour? That *Belisarius* the famousest General that the later Age of the Roman Empire knew, and in greatest favour with *Justinian* his Prince, was reduced to that want, that he was fain to beg for his living, *Date obolum Belisario.* This is commonly the lot of great Favourites, *Fatum potentiæ rarò sempiternæ*, (saies *Tacitus*) *quippe satias capit aut illos cùm omnia tribuerunt, aut hos cùm nihil reliquum est quod cupiant.* The common fate of worldly preferment, that it seldome lasts, Princes being either cloy'd with giving their favors, or subjects with receiving them, when they have no more to give, nor these to receive. *Bajazet.*

And in our dayes, these changes and revolutions of the wheel of Providence have been ordinary.

We have seen in one *Royal Family*, (and that one of the most eminent in these parts of the

world) a great and puiſſant Monarch, in the face of the Sun, at noon-day, at the gate of his own Palace, in the moſt populous City of theſe three Nations, in the midſt of thouſands of his paſſionate well-wiſhers, and zealous partizans, laying his head upon a fatal block; three Queens of his line and alliance, reduced to the Contribution of Foraigners, for a mean ſubſiſtence; and a numerous iſſue of the ſame family, cruſhed under the ſame wheel of Providence, in whom not many years ſince theſe Nations rejoyced, as the budding hopes of an uninterrupted ſucceſſion.

We have ſeen a *Parliament*, the darling of the people, ſitting under the protection of a perpetual Act, crumbled into pieces, and at laſt wholly diſſolved with the *crucifige* of that very people, that a few years ſince cryed *Hoſanna*, and proſtrated their very hearts at their feet, to pave them a triumphant entrance into that truſt they had elected them unto.

We have ſeen a formidable *Meteor of Policy* lately elevated to a great height of confidence and preſumption, *lifting up the horn on high*, or (as a Learned *Jew* reads the words) *againſt the high God*, and *ſpeaking with a ſtiffe neck*, caught like *Abrahams* Ram, *by the horns in a buſh*, and made a juſt ſacrifice to the ſcorn and contempt of all men; and their *Arm withered* in the very act, for ſtretching them out againſt the Prophets of the Lord.

*R. Immanuel.*

In a word, ſuch changes of publique affairs, as if the ſtarres, or thoſe that pretend to great familiarity with them, had been but ordinary Prophets, they could not have overſeen, without an in-

inexcuſable neglect. Such wonderful, and momentous Providences as all *Europe* is concerned in, ſhould not in my judgement have been omitted among our Calculators, (who are at leiſure to take abundant notice of (that farre more inconſiderable thing) *the Clergy*) except poſſibly they calculated the Common-wealths Nativity upon black Munday, when they had not light enough to erect their Scheme. However at the preſent, let them paſſe with this *memento*, that *it is not for vain man, to know the times and ſeaſons, which the Father hath kept in his own power*; and that undoubtedly, God Almighty is better able to keep his own counſel, then to acquaint the Starres with ſuch affairs, or at leaſt their Secretaries, who make a livelihood of blabbing all that they know, and more too. But (to leave this digreſſion.)

* The day of the great Eclipſe 1652. concerning which our Stargazers prognoſticated ſuch monſtrous darkneſs but were confuted by the event. Acts 1.7.

This is that great Truth, which Scripture ſo much inculcates upon men, that (it ſeems) are very ſlow of heart to beleeve it. How often doth God tell us this truth, in various forms of expreſſions? *That he raiſeth the poor out of the duſt, and lifteth the needy from the dunghil, that he may ſet him with Princes*, Pſal. 113.7. *That he powreth contempt upon Princes, and maketh them to wander in the wilderneſſe*, whiles (on the other ſide) he *ſetteth the poor on high*, Pſal 107.41,42. that he *raiſeth the beggar from the dunghill, and maketh him to inherit the Crown of glory*, becauſe the *pillars of the earth are his*, 1 Sam. 2.7,8. that he *cuts off the ſpirit of Princes, and is terrible to all the Kings of the earth*, Pſal. 76.12.

Inſomuch, that it ſeems wonderful to me,

that (after so much clear conviction, both from Scripture and experience) the lustre of present greatness should usually so blinde the eyes of great ones, and flatter them with a perswasion of immunity from these changes, as it doth. That their *inward thoughts* should still be, (that which this Psalmist notes, as a great folly, *That their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations*, Psal. 49. 11. That they conceit their *mountain* to be so *strong, that they shall never be moved*, Psal. 30. 6 7.

That when men cast about all manner of ways for advancement, they should not so much as think of God; nay, that they should entertain an Atheistical conceit, that a conscientious walking with God, is the only way to spoil their preferment. (As if indeed that which *Balak* told *Balaam*, who was a little too nice for his design, were true, that the *Lord keeps men from honour.*) That he that wil be great, must have a conscience as large as his designs, lest being too straight-laced, it cause miscarriage. That *seeming* good should be accounted a more ready road to greatness, then *being* so. Surely, did men believe God to be the Soveraign Disposer of all preferments, they would in reason be able to conclude, that he would advance his own servants rather then others, if advancement be good for them. But because men do not cordially believe this Truth, therefore they neglect him, and prostitute their consciences to the base lusts of others. Insomuch that a man would think, when he reads the stories of some great Politicians lives, that the Devil and they had struck a bargain upon the terms,

Num. 24. 11.

terms which our Saviour refused. *Luke* 4. 6. *All this power will I give thee, and the glory of these Kingdoms, for that is delivered to me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If therefore thou wilt worship me, all shall be thine.* Or, that they had been bred with that great French Courtier, that chose a part in *Paris*, before a part in *Paradise*. Or, Lastly, that they had learned those Heathen Politicks of

*Flectere si nequeo superos Acheronta movebo;* *Virg.*
And,

*Vare, regustatum digito terebrare salinum* *Pers.*
*Contentus perages, si vivere cum Jove tendis.*

How much better were it for men to keep *Gods high way* to greatness, which though it may seem the *farther way about* to them that are in haste, yet (considering, that *he that maketh haste to be rich cannot be innocent*, as *Solomon* sayes, *Prov.* 28. 20. and that they that purchase the *whole world* with the losse of their *own souls*, get nothing, when a dying conscience casts up their accounts, *Matth.* 16. 26.) it is the nearer way by farre; Especially when we have Gods solemn engagement for it, that *those that honour him, he will honour, and they that despise him shall be sleightly esteemed*, 1 Sam. 2. 30.

Lastly, (considering this great Truth) I cannot but wonder at the spirit that those men are of, who in such changes, as fall out against the grain of their expectations, carry themselves, rather like Atheists then Christians under them.

1. Sometimes in a pet at God himself, throwing off that mask of Religion, which they had hoped might have advantaged them; and because this

this *evil is from the Lord*, they are resolved to *wait upon him no longer*, like that wicked Prince, who is branded upon record for that ungodly resolution, 2 *Kings* 6. 33. How many have all Ages of the Church known, who because they could not obtain their designed greatness, by profession of Orthodoxy and Piety, have attempted to recover it by Apostacy and Persecution?

2. And sometimes in a furious and Diabolical rage, fuming and foaming against the Instruments causing or occasioning them. How familiar a thing hath it been with our debosht gallantry in these late years, to drink healths to the confusion of this party, and that party, to curse, and devote to the Devil such and such men, as the Authors or Promoters of those events, they storm at?

Not considering, that (as we say) *the Fox never fares better then when he is cursed*: nor, that the worst of men, in the worst actions, do but Midwife Gods secret insendments, that the crucifying of the *Lord of glory*, was indeed the *pre-determined counsel of God*, *Act.* 4. 28. though the sin of that wicked act were the guilt of those that acted therein: nor that their own sins impower those instruments, that thus thwart their designs; and that when God makes such changes, he doth it *as a Judge*, for the just punishment of those whom he afflicts thereby. Which opens a door to the last branch of this last part of the Text,

*God is the Judge.*

Whence observe,

*The greatest changes in the world are judicial acts of Gods Providence.* Not meer *acts of Sovereignty*, in which

which God acts by Prerogative, although it be his Prerogative sometimes so to act. Whence (although God use arguments from this Prerogative, to silence our cavils, in those great differences which he makes between one man and another; especially in relation to salvation and damnation, wherein the Apostles answer hath hitherto among serious and solid Christians, been judged satisfactory. *Hath not the Potter power over the clay*, &c. *Rom.* 9. 12. Nay, and even in State-changes, he makes use of the same similitude, *Jer.* 18. 8. Yet,) he hath a rule of justice which he commonly walks by; not only that *secret will* of his which makes things just, because he wills them; but also that *revealed Law of righteousness*, which he hath laid down in his Word. So that it may be truly said, (as to us and our demerits) that no man loseth honour or estate, but he that first forfeits it. If God cast out the *Canaanites*, & bring *Israel* in to tread upon the necks of their Kings, it is when *their iniquities are full*; and if God reject *Saul*, it is because he rejects God first; and if he make the sons of *Eli* vile, it is because they *made themselves vile*, and made his *sacrifice to be abhorred*. And even *Job* himself (though he were a singular example, and his abasement was rather a design to do him good, then a punishment for any notorious evil, yet) dares not plead his own innocency, except in the particulars which his friends charged him withal, injustice and hypocrisie, *Job* 9. 14, 15.

Gen. 15. 16. 1 Sam. 15. 26. 1 Sam. 3. 13.

But the causes of such Judgements are not always discernable to others, no, nor (it may be) to the men themselves, that are the subjects of them, (though

(though godly,) and therefore (even as *Job* himself) it was good counsel that he should say to the Lord, *Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me* Job 10. 2. and, *If I have done iniquity, I will do so no more*, Job 34. 31, 32.

Sometimes, they are the sins of the first Founders of a Family that entail forfeitures upon their posterity: As in the case of *Jehu*, who doing Gods work with a spirit of private revenge, cuts off the succession from his line after four generations, 2 *Kings* 10. 30. *Hos.* 1. 4.

And in the case of *Ishbosheth*, whose Title to the Crown of *Israel Saul* forfeited, it may be before he was born, at least before he possessed it.

Sometimes the sins of an immediate parent, and he godly too, as in the case of *Eli* and his posterity, may entail an affliction. So in the case of *Solomon* and his posterity, the Kings of *Judah*. *Rehoboam* lost ten Tribes for his Fathers sinne.

1 Kings 11. 31.

Sometimes it is for the sins of the people upon whom such changes have an influence. As when God saith in *Hos.* 13. 11. *I have given them Kings in mine anger, and have taken them away in my wrath.* See also *Isa.* 3. 1, 2, 3, 4.

And (in my judgement) this very consideration should move all persons under any employment, to lay out their utmost interests and abilities for God. The Wheel of Providence is perpetually turning, the highest spokes will quickly be lower. He that put down some for male-administration, will (as he can) put down you, if you administer the affairs you are intrusted with all as they did.

Sure-

Surely *David* had often such thoughts. If *Saul* were cast off, because he spared where God bade him strike, because he permitted wickedness to range unbridled over the Nation, and to lift up the horn on high, God will lay me aside too, if I follow his steps. Therefore *I will say*, &c.

It is that that concerns most of us seriously to consider.

As for the *Ministry*, God hath poured contempt upon them in an abundant measure; and truly, considering what a company of ignorant, sordid, sottish, lazy, Popish fellows, walk up and down in the garb of that profession, I wonder that errour, and sacriledge, have proceeded no farther against them, then they have. Can any expect, but God should forsake his Sanctuary, when the Priests make his sacrifices to be abhorred?

For my part, I am as zealous for the Calling and Maintenance of the Ministery of *England*, as any that hears me can be. But I desire those of my brethren here present this day, to be perswaded, that whatever contempt hath been or may be poured upon that reverend Calling, some of their owne profession have occasionally been guilty of.

And, as for the *Gentry*, I beleeve there is scarce a Noble Family in the whole Nation at this time, but God hath during these last troubles, brought under some disparagement, or diminution, or both.

For my part, I can say from my heart, that I have not a levelling spirit, and I think it a sad Judgement to a people, when *they that were*

*brought*

*brought up in scarlet imbrace dunghils*; Lam. 4. 5. God preserve civil distinctions in *England*.

But, O that God would give them hearts to consider the justice of his proceedings, in the severity of his dealing with them, and to examine themselves concerning the cause of it. Shall I help you a little to finde it out? Look upon the *great Charter*, the *Scripture-Patent*, by which (as to God) all men hold their honours, 1 *Sam.* 2. 30. Have you not dishonoured God the more, for the power he hath given you above others? God hath brought Nobility and Gentry low in *England*, and if they walk in the sinnes of their Families, which commonly have been, and yet are in most places, (a few only excepted) *pride, wantonnesse, drunkennesse, swearing, gaming, and all manner of debauchery; oppressing their poor neighbors, and Tenants, Simoniacal and Sacrilegious encroachments upon Church-maintenance, joyned with contempt of God, his Ministers, and Ordinances*, let them be assured God will bring them lower; he will reverse their Escutcheons, breake their swords, and cut off their spurres, and bring such a rot into their families, that their dwelling places shall know them no more.

Your hearts are ready to say (I know) as they did, when Christ told them God would *take away his Vineyard from them, and let it out to other husbandmen*. God forbid. And for my part, I heartily joyn with you in that prayer, so Gods Honour and his Truth may be saved; otherwise, let all the Titles in the world go for me. Better the *pride* of mans *glory* should be *stained*, then God any way disparaged. For a remedy of these

Luk. 20. 16.

evils,

evils, I beseech you, (Sirs) let my counsel be accepted of you. For Gods sake, and your own, and your posterities sake, *Get the true knowledge and the fear of God into your Families; do not maintaine a company of Ruffians, Drunkards, Swearers, and uncleane wretches, in your Livery, use them to Reading, Prayer, Repetition of Sermons, those contemned exercises of true and real godlinesse; ride abroad, and encourage honest Lectures, and bring your Tenants in by your example, who seldome goe to Heaven or Hell, but as their Landlords lead them. Get Bibles and Catechismes, and Books of Practical Divinity,* as Perkins, Preston, Reynolds, Sibs, Bolton, Greenham, &c. *into your houses, in stead of Cards and Dice, and Tables; restore* (if it be to be known) *what sacrilegious bits any of your Ancestours have devoured; give more to a godly Minister to maintain him, then to a drunken Huntsman or Falconer; let not the Gospel be cheaper to you then your pleasures. Think not lest Religion will carry a Gentleman to Heaven, then a poore labourer. Nay, I tell you he had need of more, if Christ may be believed,* Mat. 19.24.

If I am plainer with you then you desire, I pray forgive me this wrong, seeing I do it for your good.

My Apology for it is that of *Salust*, when he had ript open the vices of his times, *Bonum nullo oratio ledere potest; quippe vera, necesse est bene praedicet, falsam illius vita moresque facile superant.* *Salust. Bell. Jugurth.*

And now the Publique solemnity of this dayes meeting, calls for some particular addresses to those for whose sake I was called hither. And they shall be very brief, because I am loath to be your hinderance from your publick businesses.

And

Judge Atkins:

First of all, my Errande is to you, my Lord, concerning whom, though I am a stranger to your face and acquaintance, yet the reputation you have among good men, where you are most known, emboldens me to say as the Apostle Paul in another case concerning the Corinthians, that *your forwardnesse of minde* is such, that it is *something superfluous* for me to exhort you: and let me adde (from him also) thus much, that I hope you will *shew the proofe of your love* to Religion and Justice, and of our *boasting on your behalfe*. Onely I beseech you to give me leave faithfully to represent to you the state of the County you have now to doe withall, that so your *forward minde* may have sufficient matter to worke upon.

2 Cor. 9. 1.

2 Cor. 8. ult.

And first of all, (*my Lord*) as *to Religion*, I know not what we are; I am sure very few of us are what we should bee. But for this little Town, where your present imployment lies: I speake my thoughts freely, without spleen, or passion, that I verily perswade my selfe, if all *Augustines*, and *Epiphanius's* Catalogues of Heresies were lost, and all other ancient and moderne Records in that kinde, yet it were no hard matter to restore them with considerable enlargements from hence. We have Anabaptisme, Familisme, Socinianisme, Pelagianisme, Raunting, (and what not?) and the Devil is served in Heterodoxe Assemblies as frequently as God in ours. *There is one of the most eminent Church-Livings in this County possessed by a blasphemer; and one in whose house, I beleeve some here can testifie, the Devil is visibly as familiar, as any one of the family. And shall

* Concerning whom there will ere long be a publique account given upon the evidence of sundry Oaths, as to both parts of this Charge, and that in print by a faithfull hand.

the

the Civill Magistrate? My Lord, I beseech you see, (I know you will) to the uttermost of your power to restraine these unruly beasts, and where you want power, represent that want to those that can bestow it and I hope by this time they see need enough to do so themselves.

As for Civill Affaires, we have (blessed bee God) some among us, that would be zealous and faithfull in the Offices they are intrusted withal, if they might be borne out in so doing. Wee had the last yeare a few active Officers, and no lesse then three or foure vexatious suits, and some of them (it may be) may come before your Lordship this Assizes, commenced against them by notorious offenders, for pretended irregularity in some circumstances.

My Lord, you have one suite before you (at the least) from the issue whereof the whole County will collect whether they may dare to doe Justice, or no. Surely, if Humane Law-givers bee like the Divine, no man should bee punished for too much zeale in the execution of the Law.

My Lord, Drunkennesse is growne more impudent among us, then it was in Saint *Pauls* time. And our Officers dare not meddle with a *Common Drunkard*, for feare of an Action of

1. Thess. 5. 7.

And for Sabbath-breakers; would God we had Magistrates among us of *Nehemiahs* temper, that would *contend with them*, & *lay hands* upon them too. I am in hope, a word from your Lordship would doe much towards the execution of those

Neh. 13. 11, 17, 25

Acts and Ordinances that concern that busineſſe. Here be inſolent Robbers about the Countrey, almoſt every where; ſcarce a Gentlemans, or other able mans houſe round about this Town, but hath been aſſaulted, or threatned at leaſt, and ('tis ſaid) there is a *Corporation* of them. I hope Juſtice will make ſome of them free of the *Hang-mans Corporation*, for a terror to others.

As for you *Gentlemen*, that are of the *Commiſſion of the peace*, I doe ſomewhat pleaſe my ſelfe, that I can now call the moſt of you confidently by that name. We were like to have had (not long ſince) a *Lively-motley Heterogeneous Bench*, ſuch as the *Medley Conſtitution* of thoſe times would allow. And indeed it was not to be expected, but that thoſe that endeavoured the extirpation of the *Miniſtery* to ſet up *Independent Prieſts*, ſhould diſcard the *Gentry*, and all their ſeats with *John of Leydens Dukes*, both of the ſame ſtuffe, the *manage of the people*.

(Though I would not hereby diſparage thoſe whoſe knowne worth makes them eſteemed in the Countrey, who have the thing which firſt gave Nobility; and are as fit to begin a line of Honour to be continued to their poſterity, as thoſe from whom our preſent Gentry deſcend. But I conceive, that ſuch mixtures, except very ſparingly made, and that upon weighty conſiderations, much prejudice the ſtreame of Authority to the people.)

I beſeech you, honoured Sirs, do not think it enough to appeare upon the Bench at Aſſizes, and generall Seſſions but appoint frequent, and ſtand-

ing Privy Sessions, to rectifie publique disorders in the Countrey upon the place, to put downe *Ale-houses, the Devils Universities*, where men proceed Graduates in all manner of wickednesse; to suppresse Drunkennesse, Swearing, Sabbath-breaking: and when inferiour Officers present such offenders before you, doe not tell them by your sleight entertainment of them, that you are of *Gallio's* minde, and *care for none of those things*.

I have heard some Officers complaine of late, that they are discouraged in that part of their office: they are zealous in taking hold of such offenders, and when they come to the Justice he releaseth them. He that (having your power) does not cut off these offenders *horns* wears them, yea, and will push with them also in time. I never knew any Magistrate indulging any sin, but either he was guilty of it himselfe, or more then ordinarily inclined to it, had he sutable opportunity.

And you *Grand Inquest-men*, I am somewhat ignorant of your particular Function, but I conceive one main part of your businesse is, to make presentment of those grievances, wherein the Countrey whom you represent, needs redresse. And I hope you will not forget two things, which I thinke to be of great concernment, the one is, *want of Church-Government*, without which, Civill Government cannot be long preserved in a Christian Common-wealth. Church-levelling, and State-levelling, are twins; onely (like *Jacob* and *Esau*) the one rough and hairy, and not so apt to be dandled and made much of by the Magistrate, who usually is tender in such

things as concern publique peace; but the other a more sweet babe, which under the notion of tenderneſſe of Conſcience, and Chriſtian Liberty, hath been the fondling of former Governours, untill it had almoſt proved a *Jacob*, a *Supplanter* indeed, by exchanging the *voice of Jacob*, for the *hands of Eſau*.

The other is, *Liberty of Prophecying*, through the indulgence of former Powers, grown to ſuch an height, that every whipping-boy, when he he hath gotten an Heretical notion or two by the end, hath impudence enough to intrude into any Pulpit to vent it; or elſe to draw aſide poor ſilly ſouls into corners, and infect them there without controll. And ſome of them though they uſurpe the *place of the Clergy*, yet if they ſhould fall into your hands, would not be capable of the *priviledge of the Clergy*, and hang for not being able to read.

Friends, for Gods ſake, for the Goſpels ſake, for your poor ſouls ſake, for your near relations ſake, ſome of whom are in perpetuall danger of being poiſoned, till your ſuperiours, as the voice of all that love the welfare of *Jeruſalem* in the County, that *nothing is ſo intolerable, as a boundleſſe Toleration*.

You of *both Juries*, take heed to your Oaths and Conſciences, and remember that *he that con-*
Prov. 17. 15. *demneth the righteous, and he that acquitteth the wicked, are both an abomination to the Lord.* If any ſilly Cattel come before you, doe not gratifie a malicious proſecutor by ſaying their *ears* are *horns*; but where you finde *horns* indeed, and thoſe *lifted up*, and ſuch as have uſed to *puſh in time*

*paſt*,

*past*, you know the Law of God as well as man, allowes you to return such guilty.

I had almost forgotten you, *Gentlemen of the Gown*, and 'tis a wonder I should, when I spoke of *Levelling*. I honour your profession, and therefore I will presume to adventure a little good counsell to your acceptance, without any other *fee*, then the testimony of a good *Conscience*, in the discharge of my duty. You know that Law is the *Sanctuary* of a free subject; for Gods sake, do not you be guilty of turning it into an *Inquisition-house*, where poor mens cases are so long stretched out upon the *rack* of needlesse delayes, till both their purse-strings, and heert-strings crack. Surely, there is an evill report abroad concerning some of you, that you betray the *priviledges of this Sanctuary*; which makes many an honest man rather run all hazards, then flye thither for refuge. 'Its said, some of you are like indented Pictures, which if you look on them severall wayes, present you with severall faces in one Table; such as can take on both hands, of one to speak, and of another to hold their peace, or (as bad) to say nothing to the purpose. As Juries should not by verdict, so neither should Lawyers by pleading, turn *eares* into *horns*, and *horns* into *eares*, represent a man or cause otherwise then they are.

I know not to whom to recommend the care of the *Prison*, but to you all. I know it is the Sheriffes Prison, but I know not how farre his power extends in the things that I am to move in order to its reformation. At most, Sheriffs are

anuall,

annuall, and can take order but for their yeare; but you, my Lord, and the Bench, may reform for perpetuity.

For my part, I looke upon Goals, as they are usually furnished with Keepers, as Houses of *Infection, and looseneſſe*, rather then houſes (as they ſhould be) of *correction and reſtraint*. I aſſure you it hath ſadded my ſoule to heare, when I have come in and out to ſee priſoners, the poore Felons in the Dungeon raunting and roaring, as if they were reſolved to walk by the Epicures principles, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we ſhall die*. And I feare ſcarce any one comes within thoſe walls, but he is made *ten times more the child of the Devill then he was before*. O that you, my Lord, and the Bench, would take ſome courſe that thoſe poore creatures that have not long to *live*, may be made fit to *die*, that they might be Catechized and Preached to. I heare there are places where the Priſons have a Preacher appointed and allowed upon the Sheriffes accounts. For God ſake, my Lord, and Gentlemen, let ſomething be done herein, that thoſe you condemn to the *Gallowes*, may not be ſent to the *Devil* too.

1 Cor. 15 32.

Laſtly, *you of the Countrey*, that have buſineſſe with the Court, look to it, take heed of malice, perjury, and revenge. You that go to Law with one another, if for trifles, let fall your ſuits; the charges you put any one to in a vexatious ſuit, is ſo much money pickt out of his purſe, and it may be ſo much neceſſary ſuſtenance pluckt out of his poore wives and childrens bellies; if for matters of moment, and your cauſe be juſt, yet

uſe

use mercy, charity, and moderation.

Lastly, let us all beseech the Lord, who is *the Judge of Judges*, as well as *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, that he will be with ours in the judgement, that so (to close my Sermon, with the close of my Psalm) *All the horns of the wicked may be cut off, but the horns of the righteous may be exalted.*

FINIS.